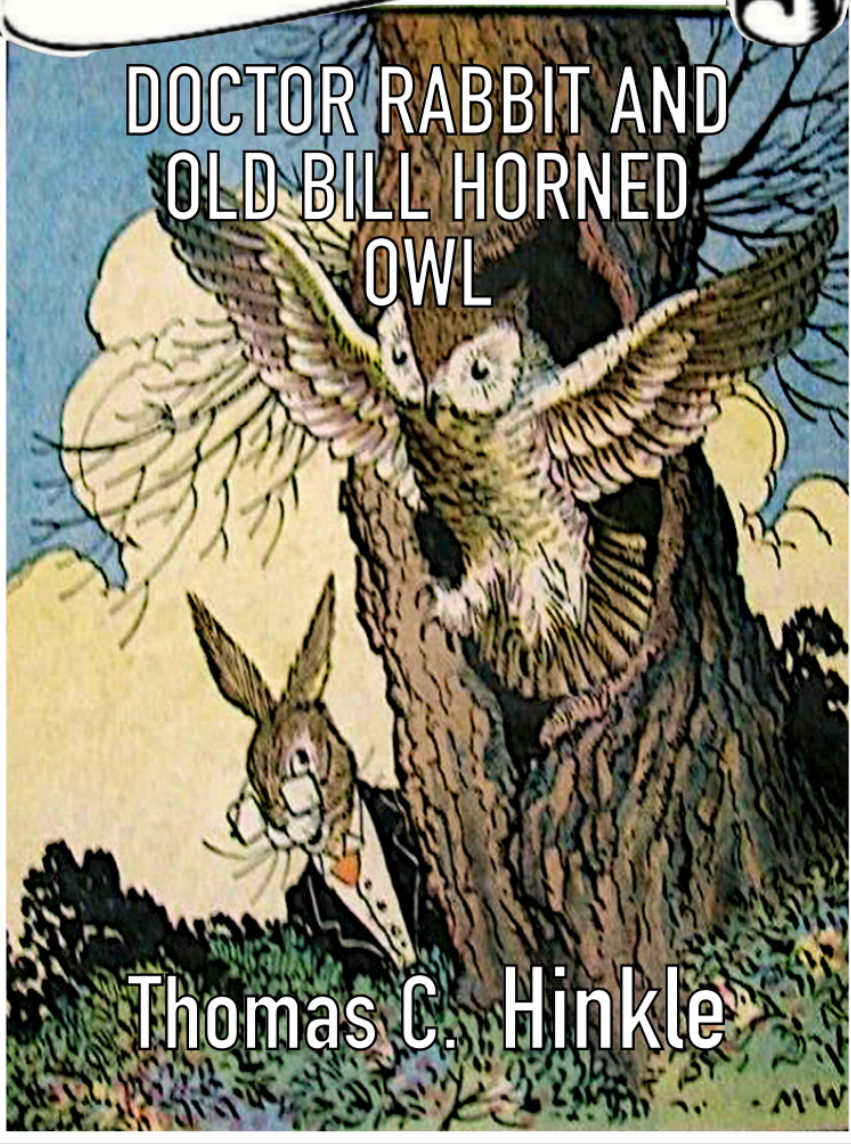
Gunston Classics

DOCTOR RABBIT AND OLD BILL HORNED OWL



Thomas C. Hinkle

Gunston & The Book Bunnies

The Gunston Trust

Gunston Classics

DOCTOR RABBIT AND OLD BILL HORNED OWL

BY THOMAS C. HINKLE

MILO WINTER - ILLUSTRATOR

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PO Box 5905
Baltimore, Maryland 21282-5905
USA

Introduction

Welcome to the Great Green Woods and meet all the wonderful animals that live there. Enjoy all the fun and adventures for young readers and listeners. Charming tales of neighbor helping neighbor that build pleasant and innocent memories of childhood and delightful bedtime dreams.

TGT

Doctor Rabbit and Old Bill Horned Owl

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Doctor Rabbit sprang away from
Old Bill Horned Owl

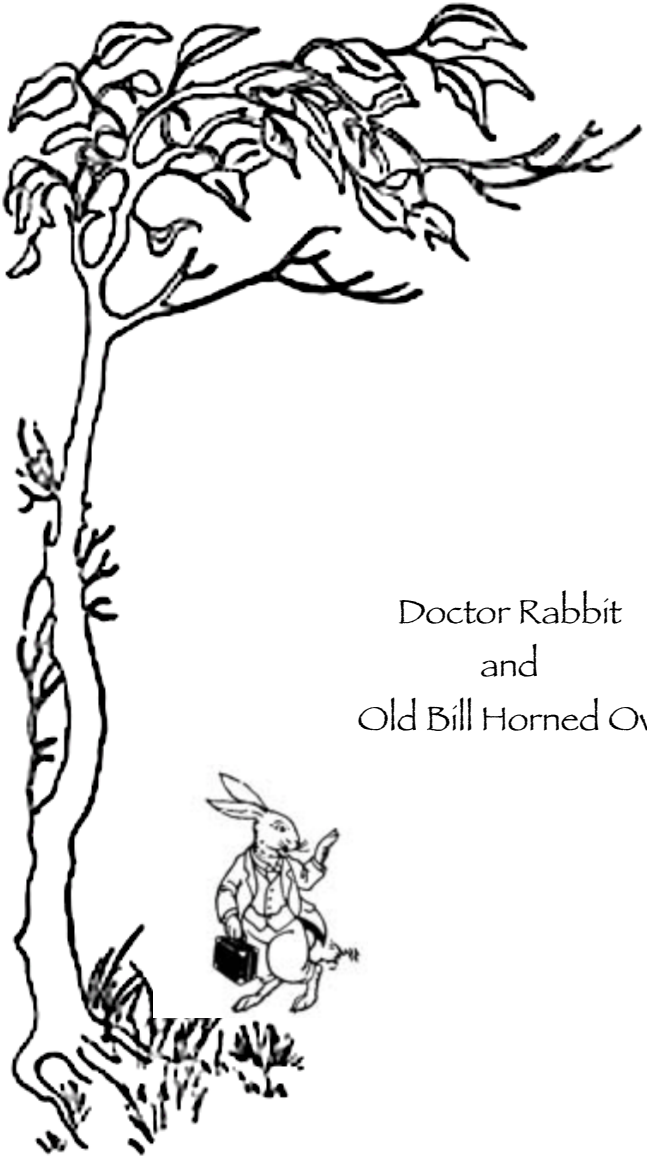
He sprang into the air and kicked Old Bill

"I can't see any harm in hopping in there"

He squawked and fell of the box backward

O. Possum dived into the leaves

He was caught- good and tight



Doctor Rabbit
and
Old Bill Horned Owl

1
DOCTOR RABBIT WAKENS SUDDENLY

Doctor Rabbit was sitting in his big chair in his front yard, sound asleep. It was a beautiful summer morning, and the sun was shining soft and warm through the leafy branches of the treesl Little sunbeams danced about over Doctor Rabbit as if playing hide and seek, but they couldn't wake him up. No, indeed, the little sunbeams made him so warm and comfortablt that he slept all the better.

Doctor Rabbit had been up all night long, doctoring Ray Coon. Greedy Ray had caught a big fish in the Murmuring Brook and had been so hungry that he ate it all up; and it made him dreadfully ill. For a while it looked as though he would die, and perhaps he would have died if Doctor Rabbit hadn't come with some medicine and cured him.

You see, it wasn't strange that Doctor Rabbit slept so soundly now, and of course his sleep was all the sweeter because he was sleeping out in the fine fresh air of the woods.

As he sat there in his big chair, doctor Rabbit smiled now and then, while he slept. Some pleasant dream made him smile. Doctor Rabbit is always so kind and jolly

when he's awake that when he's asleep his dreams are sure to be pleasant.

Well it is hard to tell just how long doctor Rabbit would have sat there in his chair and slept if something hadn't happened. But if he had known who was in the Big Green Woods he wouldn't have stayed in that chair another instant. I should say he wouldn't!

Blue Jay, who is usually pretty noisy, had been sitting on a near-by tree for quite a while just looking at doctor Rabbit. Blue Jay had been keeping still, because he didn't want to wake his good friend. But all of a sudden something happened. Old Bill Horned Owl swooped down and almost had Blue Jay before he could fly away. When he missed Blue Jay, he flew, his sharp claws all spread, straight for Doctor Rabbit! And doctor Rabbit was sound asleep!

Doctor Rabbit spang away
for Old Bill Horned Owl!

"Doctor Rabbit! Doctor Rabbit!" Blue Jay screamed at the top of his voice. And Doctor Rabbit opened his eyes. He was badly frightened, He knew by Blue Jay's shrill cry that some great danger was near.

In a flash Doctor Rabbit sprang away from Old Bill Horned Owl and darted into a briar patch. He was a little nearer to the briar patch then to his beloved tree, and naturally he chose the nearest place.

Without a word, Bill Horned Owl flew up to limb over the briar patch and settled himself there. He was going to watch for Doctor Rabbit to come out. Bill Horned Owl was extra hungry, and that's why he happened to come out in the daytime. Generally he hunts only at night. He was the biggest of all the owls, for he was a great horned owl.

Blue Jay flew a little distance away and shrieked angrily, "You didn't catch Doctor Rabbit, Old Bill, for I warned him. I'd like to drive you a hundred miles away!"

Bill Horned Owl just turned and looked at Blue Jay. And how Old Bill did laugh! "Ho! ho! ho! Perhaps I shall make a meal of you someday. And I'm surely going to have good luck here in a minute. Yes, sir, I'm just about to catch a nice fat rabbit for breakfast. Ho! ho! ho! ho!" And Old Bill Horned Owl laughed until his great voice echoed all ove the Big Green Woods.

But Doctor Rabbit was safe enough in the briar patch, and he had his eye on Bill Horned Owl. And Doctor Rabbit wasn't as much worried as you might think. He knew Old Bill was pretty mean but he chuckled as he hid in the briars and watched him.

"I'll tend to him some way," Doctor Rabbit laughed. "He needn't think he can come into my woods and run things; I'll tend to you, Old Bill!" Doctor Rabbit laughed very softly. "I'll tend to you! You just wait!"

Of course he said this very softly, and Old Bill didn't hear a word of it.

2

BILL HORNED OWL WATCHES AND WAITS

Blue Jay kept screaming at Bill Horned Owl with all his might, but Old Bill paid no attention to him. He sat on the limb of a tree just above the briar patch where Doctor Rabbit was hiding, and chuckled and waited. He thought he surely had Doctor Rabbit now.

There was another owl who lived in the Big Green Woods - Uncle Owl. But Uncle Owl never troubled the little creatures of the woods.

This was because he had lost a foot. He was old, too, and his claws were pretty badly worn. And so, being crippled, Uncle Owl was very careful about whom he tried to catch. He lived mostly on crickets and grasshoppers and bugs, and never tried to catch anything else. So Doctor Rabbit and his friends were not at all afraid of Uncle Owl. But Old Bill Horned Owl! He was very different, and they had good reasons to be afraid of him - every one of them. Even Poky Skunk was afraid of him, as you will see later on.

Yes, Old Bill Horned Owl was very hungry this morning, or he would not have been out in the daytime trying to catch Doctor Rabbit. You see, Bill Horned Owl,

like all the other owls, can see much better at night than in the daylight, and that's why he generally hunts after dark. But sometimes he gets so hungry he will chase a rabbit or a bird in the daytime.

Well, after Old Bill had watched for some time without seeing anyone, he grew tired of waiting.

"I'll frighten that rabbit out of that briar patch!" he said. And he shouted, "Who! who! who! who!"

But Doctor Rabbit only lay still and laughed. Old Bill couldn't scare him. And Blue Jay screamed, "Get awy from that briar patch, Old Bill Horned Owl! You can't scare Doctor Rabbit out of there! Lie still, Doctor Rabbit. Old Bill Horned Owl is right over the priar patch. Don't come out!

And Blue Jay flew from tree to tree, maki8ng all the noise he could. That's what he always does when an enemy comes into the Big Green Woods.

All of a sudden Blue Jay cried, "Goodness! I must tell Jim Crow about Old Bill at once!"

You see, it's mighty dangerous for Jim Crow and his family to have Old Bill Horned Owl in the woods. The crows are like you and me - they can't see well at night. But Old Bill Horned Owl can see at night - you bet he can. And sometimes he flies through the trees in the dark, hunting for crows roosting on a limb. And it's pretty hard on them if he catches them. But when one crow hears his big voice ringing through the woods at night, he wakes up alll the other crows. Then they keep awake the rest of the night and listen and watch for him.

Blue Jay was so excited that he no sonner made up his mind to warn Jim Crow than he forgot all about it. He kept right on scolding Old Bill Horned Owl. But he suddenly remembered when from his hiding place in the tangled briars Doctor Rabbit called out, "Hurry up, Blue Jay! Hurry up and tell JHim Crow about it. I'll take care of myself. You just hurry and tell Jim Crow!"

And so Blue Jay few away at once. He knew well enough that Doctor Rabbit was hiding in the briar patch and peeping up at Bill Horned Owl. Yes, sir, he just knew it, and he was sure Doctor Rabbit was much too smart to come out of his hiding place and get caught. Blue Jay shouted as he flew away, "All right, Doctor, I'll go and tell Jim Crow!"

3
DOCTOR RABBIT HAS A NEW WORRY

Doctor Rabbit sat in the briar patch and peeped up at Bill Horned Owl. He saw Old Bill smiling and stepping from side to side on the limb. But no matter how much he moved about he never forgot to keep his eye on the briar patch. Bill was well pleased. There was no doubt about it.

All of a sudden, Doctor Rabbit thought of something, and it bothered him dreadfully. He looked through the lower part of the vines and out into the woods to see if anyone was coming.

You see, doctor Rabbit had suddenly remembered that he had invited his friend the little cottontail over for dinner. The little lame cottontail lived in a pretty little ravine, and quite near to a spring. He had a fine home up there in the rocks, and he was safe as could be so as he didn't get too far away from his hole. Being lame, he naturally couldn't run very fast, and it was dangerous for him to go far from home unless someone like Doctor Rabbit was with him to help him out.

"Well, well," said Doctor Rabbit to himself. "This is a fine business, sure enough. I have asked Tiny Cottontail to come over and have dinner with me, and now here's this Old Bill Horned Owl hanging round and not even allowing me to get out and eat in my own woods. And what if poor

Tiny should happen to come through the woods just now! My! What could I do? And he may be coming any minute now. Goodness! I've got to think mighty hard.

Once Doctor Rabbit thought he would shout to Bill Horned Owl to "get out of these woods and stay out." But he said to himself, "That wouldn't do any good. No, he'd just make fun of me, and stick all the closer to this briar patch. Yes, indeed, I'm in a pretty bad fix, but we'll see who is in a fix when I get through with this business. Old Bill Horned Owl is laughing now, and having a fine time, but I guess maybe I'll have something to say before long. He's having a fine time now, and running things to suit himself, but maybe a little later on I'll be running things to suit myself."

Doctor Rabbit kept still and watched. He watched Bill Horned Owl, and he looked out into the woods, too. He knew that Old Bill is quick enough on the wing to catch a rabbit on the run if there aren't too many trees in the way. It would be worse still, of course, for the lame cottontail. Doctor Rabbit scratched his head and tried to think wht he could do if Tiny happened to pass near and Old Horned Owl spied him.

Well sir, the very thing Doctor Rabbit was most afraid would happen, did happen. He looked out through the thicket, and there was the little lame cottontail hopping along through the woods. He was limping, as he always did. And he was coming right toward the briar patch over which Bill Horned Owl sat.

The lame cottontail intended, of course, to hop right on past the briar patch and up to Doctor Rabbit's house. He supposed, of course, Doctor Rabbit was at home waiting for him, and perhaps getting the vegetables ready for dinner.

And so the little lame cottontail went hopping along, as happy as if there had not been an owl within a mile of him. In fact, an owl was the last thing he would have thought of.

But Doctor Rabbit said, as he watched from the briar patch, "If Old Bill Horned Owl ever gets his claws into Tiny or me, it will be the last of us. I've got to do it this minute.

4
DOCTOR RABBIT DOES A BRAVE DEED

Bill Horned Owl heard the little lame cottontail coming through the woods, and he turned his hed and looked.

"Well! well!" said Old Bill to himself. "Here's better luck still! I'll wait until that foolish rabbit comes a little nearer, then I'll grab him."

Just then Doctor Rabbit shouted, "Run and hid, Tiny! Run and hid! Old Bill Horned Owl is watching you!"

Well, that certainly did make things happen. The little lame cottontail was so frightened for an instant that he did nothing. He just stood still and seemed frozen where he stood. You see he had been coming along there quietly and peacefully, not dreaming of any trouble, and when Doctor Rabbit shouted out so loud that Old Bill was right there-- well, it was too much. Somehow the little cottontail knew what Doctor Rabbit said was true, but it seemed he could't move. That's the way people do sometimes. When they ought to run for their lives they only stand and stare.

Well, Old Bill Horned Owl knew what to do, even if the little cottontail didn't. And when poor Tiny stopped still as if frozen, Old Bill swooped down to grab him. That

was enough. It brought the lame cottontail to his senses. He ran like a streak. He was so scared he forgot all about his lame leg. He got away just in time, too. In fact, Old Bill got so close that Tiny said afterwards he felt the air moved by Bill's wings. But Old Bill was right after him again, and chased him up and down through the Big Green Woods. The lame cottontail was doing his best at turning and running and dodging, and he was doing it pretty well, too. But it was too much for a little lame cottontail. Doctor Rabbit could see that it was. So he ran from his hiding place, good and angry, even if he was a little bit scared, and shouted:

"I'm coming, Tiny! I'm coming! Keep up! I'm coming!" And Doctor Rabbit was coming too. All the time he was saying that,

he was running right toward Old Bill Horned Owl, who was flying low and trying to grab the lame cottontail.

Poor Tiny was so badly frightened that he began to whimper a bit. That made Doctor Rabbit mighty angry at Old Bill Horned Owl. And you know Doctor Rabbit is not weak or lame. No, sir! He is big and strong, and when he really gets angry, he can show people a few things.

"Don't cry!" shoulted Doctor Rabbit to the lame cottontail. "I'm coming!"

And he ran up behind Old Bill, who was just over the lame cottontail. Then he sprang into the air and kicked Old Bill so hard he fell flopping to the ground. The lame cottontail ran into a briar patch safe and sound.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Doctor Rabbit as he ran away. "guess you didn't know I could

He sprang into the air and kicked Old Bill!

jump so high, and guess you didn't know I could kick so hard, did you, Old Bill Horned Owl? Good day, I must be going! And away ran Doctor Rabbit through the woods.

But in no time at all Old Bill was up from the ground and after him.

"I'll get you!" he shouted. "I'll get you, you big, fat rabbit!

But Doctor Rabbit wasn't one bit frightened. He felt so fine he wanted to run, now that he was out and at it. And the lame cottontail was safe too. So Doctor Rabbit shouted again as he ran:

"Ha! ha! ha! Very well, Old Bill Horned Owl! Come and get me! But you'll have to hurry, Bill, 'cause I'm going to run awful fast, Ha! ha! ha!

And on came Old Bill after Doctor Rabbit, but doctor Rabbit sprang first to one side, then to the other and darted around

trees so easily and so quickly that by and by Old Bill Horned Owl saw it was no use. He said to himself that he would quite for now. And so he flew up to a limb of a big tree to think about it and talk things over with himself. Doctor Rabbit slipped through the underbrush and got close enough to hear all he said. This is what Old Bill said:

"There's no use in trying to get either one of these rabbits today. It's too light. Tonight I'll probably get both of them. Yes, when night comes I can see everything that oves in the woods. Then none of them can get away. I 'spect this big, fat rabbit doesn't know that. Well, tonight I'll show him."

Old Bill felt pretty good again. He felt sure he could get Doctor Rabbit when night came, and maybe the other rabbit too.

But Doctor Rabbit knew all about Old Bill Horned Owl. He knew without being

told how well Old Bill can see after night. And he knew that he and his little friends would certainly have to be on the watch every minute, too, But Doctor Rabbit didn't get all worked up about it. No, he even laughed to himself as he listened to Old Bill talking. There was no doubt that Bill Horned Owl would be flying through the trees and down over the ground when night came. That part was true., And it ws also true that he would snap up Doctor Rabbit or any one he got his claws on. Everybody in the Big Green woods would have to have his eyes wide open after dark.

5

OLD BILL TAKES A NAP

By and by Doctor Rabbit decided he had heard about all that Old Bill was going to say for the present, so he made up his mind he would slip away and see how the little lame cottontail was.

He slipped out of the underbrush as softly as he could, but he happened to step on a dry twig, and it broke. Old Bill heard

the twig snap, and looked down just as Doctor Rabbit slipped out, then down he flew for Doctor Rabbit. And he came so near getting him he actually pulled out a little fur. But Doctor Rabbit ran like the wind and darted in under a great, spreading elm whose limbs almost touched the ground. Well sir, Old Bill was a little too sure of his game, or else he didn't see the limb soon enough. Anyway he bumped into a low-hanging branch, and it stopped him. When he looked around again, Doctor Rabbit was gone.

Doctor Rabbit was already quite a distance away, and running toward the place where he had left the little lame cottontail . He ran his best, and soon came to the very briar patch he had seen the lame cottontail run into. Doctor Rabbit ran in and sure enough, there was Tiny.

"Hi! Ho! said Doctor Rabbit, as he lay down inside the thicket. He was prertty tired after so much running but he laughed as he lay there panting.

"Mercy goodness!" said the little lame cottontail. "That was a mighty close call for us, wasn't it, Doctor Rabbit?"

"Well, no-not for me," chuckled Doctor Rabbit. "He did come pretty close once, but that was because I wasn't expecting him quite so soon. When I really got started I had an easy time. He's a pretty bad old owl, though. There's no doubt about it. He did his best to catch you and me, too, Tiny. We can be very sure of that!"

"Oh my goodness!" said the little lame cottontail, his eyes wide with fear. "What in the world are we going to do now, Doctor Rabbit! Why, with this dreadful Old Bill Horned

in the Big Green Woods we can't move far enough to get anything to eat. And how am I to ever get back home? I'm aftaid we're done for!

But Doctor Rabbit only laughed about it. "Why, friend Cottontail," he said, "don't take on so. I've been in many a tight place, and I've always come out ahead. Don't take on so. It is pretty bad, I'll agree, but just wait until I have my say. He hasn't got us yet. Come on friend. Let's slip out a little way and look around. If we are very careful we can see Old Bill Horned Owl while he doesn't see us. He's pretty stupid in the daytime, and if we are careful I think we can get near the tree where he is now. He's probably half asleep by this time, anyway, for I'm sure he thinks he might as well doze the rest of the day and hunt for us when it gets dark."

The little lame cottontail was very much afraid to go, but he had so much faith in Doctor Rabbit that he went in spite of his fear.

They crept softly back toward the tree where they had seen Old Bill before. It was a big elm, and Bill seemed to want to sit up in that tree. And there he sat, as plain as day, dozing on a limb.

"Sh-h!" said Doctor Rabbit. "There he is, asleep on that limb! Do you see him?"

"Yes," said the little lame cottontail, trembling. "Let's get away from here. I want to go back home."

6

THE LITTLE COTTONTAIL GOES HOME

"Very well," said Doctor Rabbit, still looking up at Bill Horned Owl, who was asleep on the limb. "But come on over, Tiny, and have something to eat with me. You know I invited you over to take dinner with me, and I couldn't think of not entertaining you, now that you are here."

Oh, no, no!" whispered the little lame cottontail, trembling with fear. "No, no, Doctor Rabbit. It was good of you to ask me over, but I know you'll excuse me. Only go home with me as quickly as possible. That's all I ask."

"Very well," said Doctor Rabbit. "It's too bad, though, to let Old Bill Horned Owl make you miss a good dinner."

Now, although Doctor Rabbit did not say so, he himself was as hungry as a bear. Still, he thought, "I can wait until I get Tiny safely home before I take time to eat. He is so scared he has lost his appetite, but I'm about starved!"

Now, if Doctor Rabbit had only stopped to eat somethng before they started, it would have been much better for him. In fact, it was just his hunger that came very near being the end of him, as well shall soon see.

Old Bill Horned Owl, dozing on the limb, would have been delighted if he had known what was going to happen. Of course, Old Bill did not know that it was Doctor Rabbit's hunger that finally got him into trouble. And Old Bill didn't care what it was either, just so something put Doctor Rabbit within reach of his claws.

Doctor Rabbit and his little friend hurried away, and when they had got deep in the woods Doctor Rabbit said: "Don't worry to much about Old Bill Horned Owl, Tiny. I'll look after him. You see if I don't".

"I believe every word you say," said the lame cottontail, "and I'd get clear away from theses woods if you weren't here to look after Old Bill. Nobody but you could think out a scheme to get rid of him. How are you going to to to it, Doctor Rabbit?"

"I don't know yet. I'm just thinking about it." said Doctor Rabbit.

When they came to a place where the trees and underbrush were very dense, Doctor Rabbit said: "Now let's get out of the woods here and cut through the apple orchard. It's closer to your home."

So they went up the side of the ravine and soon stood at the edge of the apple orchard. It was nearer this way as Doctor Rabbit had said. And then, too he had thought of something else. It was better to go this way because they could run along under the wide, spreading branches of the apple trees and keep out of sight of Bill Horned Owl. It was a fine apple orchard. The trees were very old, and the tips of their long branches reached to the ground. And the ends of the branches of each tree touched another tree. So Doctor Rabbit and

cottontail ran along under this fine cover and felt quite safe. They were sure Old Bill Horned Owl couldn't see them, even if he was in the orchard.

But when they reached the other side of the big apple orchard, they were very much surprised. They could see right across the gorge where the little cottontail's home was, and they could see his house, too. And in front of his door stood two hunters. The hunters' dogs were sniffing and sniffing at the door.

Pretty soon, however, Doctor Rabbit and Tiny heard one of those hunters say: "Let's go. There's been a rabbit in there, no doubt, but I don't believe he's in there now. And if he were, we should have to stay here a long time before we could twist him out."

The little lame cottontail trembled. The idea of twisting a rabbit out! That means poking a long forked stick into the hole and twisting it in the rabbit's fur, and generally pulling a lot of the skin off. Of course nothing could be more cruel, as little lame cottontail and Doctor Rabbit knew. But after the little cottontail remembered the many times that the terrible hunters had tried to put a stick down his crooked hole and had failed, he felt better.

"I'm not much afraid of them when I'm in my hole," he told Doctor Rabbit. "Many times I've heard them poking sticks in at my doorway, but they never can catch me that way. No, I'm not worried about the hunters," he continued, "but I certaily am worried about Old Bill Horned Owl. He almost caught me in his claws." And the little lame

cottontail shivered all over at the very thought of it.

"He certainly did come pretty near catching you," Doctor Rabbit said. "but anyhow, you got away, and didn't even get a scratch. And we fooled that old owl about as badly as he's ever been fooled. I can see him now, flopping on the ground. Things could always be much worse, Tiny. You just stay close to your hole in the rocks and keep a sharp lookout for a shadow moving over you. You know Bill Horned Owl is so silent when he flies. And when the moon and stars are shining, then we must watch every moment."

The two friends had been hopping right along, and now they had reached the spring beside the little lame cottontail's house. Doctor Rabbit reached down and

took a drink of the cool water. Then he said: "Yes, we like to be out on moonlight nights. That's when we have our best fun. But that's just when Bill Horned Owl sees the best, and that's when he's out looking for us. But never fear! I'll take care of him- indeed I will! And Doctor Rabbit laughed until his sides shook. "I'll see to it that he gets out of our woods and stays out!"

It made the little lame cottontail feel mighty good to hear Doctor Rabbit say this. "Good day!" Doctor Rabbit said to his little friend. And he went running back toward the Big Green Woods. He went back the way he came so he could run under the cover of the big apple trees. But if Doctor Rabbit had known what was going to happen because he decided to go back through the big apple orchard, he never would have gone that way.

7
DOCTOR RABBIT FINDS SOME CORN

Now, as you may know, Doctor Rabbit had invited the little lame cottontail ove to eat dinner with him. Then, because of Old Bill Horned Owl, Doctor Rabbit had to take his friend home without either of them having had any dinner. So Doctor Rabbit was certainly very hungry as he went back.

He was thinking about how far it seemed to the big sycamore tree under which the tender blue grass grew. And the more he thought about it, the hungrier he got. Doctor Rabbit felt just as a little boy does who has been to the river swimming and is awfully thirsty. He knows where there is a well of delicious, cool water, but it is about a mile away. The boy gets so thirsty thinking about the nice, cool water that he can scarcely stand it. And that's exactly how it was with Doctor Rabbit. He got more and more hungry every minute he thought about that grass.

And then he happened to think, "Whew! But wouldn't I like to come across some corn! I haven't tasted any for a month.

Just then, as sure an anything, he did come across a little pile of nice, fresh shelled corn. He rubbed his eyes for a moment to

see if he was dreaming!. But he wasn't. It was sure enough corn, but in such a queer place. Doctor Rabbit had never seen anything like it before, and he said,
"Now, I'm as hungry as a bear, and I certainly would like that corn, but I don't like the looks of the thing it's in.

The little pile of corn was lying pretty far back in a box that was open at one end. The box was plenty big enough for Doctor Rabbit to get into. There was no doubt about that. And he would have plenty of room to turn around in it if he wanted to. No, it was not that the box looked too small. It was just that Doctor Rabbit did not want to go into a box at all for corn or anything else. He never does like to do such things. He would rather eat out in the open where he can look about him all the time.

"I can't see any harm in hopping in here"

He walked back a little and looked in at the corn. His mouth actually watered, he wanted that corn so badly, Just above the little pile of shelled corn he saw a small straight stick that went through a hole in the top of the box. What Doctor Rabbit did not happen to see was that there was a sliding door at the open end of the box. Yes, there was a door there, and it was held up in such a way that if the stick inside the box was pushed, a little door would slide down in a hurry. Any if anyone was in the box when this happened, he would be caught in there.

Well Doctor Rabbit looked at the strange looking box, and then he looked at the pile of shelled corn. "Well," he said to himself, "I declare, here's a nice dinner for me. I need it too. It won't take me but a minute to eat it, and then I'll go on and tell

my friends to look out for Old Bil Horned Owl. I cant' do much as long as I'm so hungry, anyway. I don't see anyone around. I can't see any harm in hopping in here for a few seconds. I believe I'll do it. If anyone comes up while I'm eating, I can surely hear him and I can get out and be gone in a jiffy. Yes, I've simply got to have that corn!"

And so Doctor Rabbit set his medicine case on the ground and hopped right into the box. At first, for some reason he did not go right up to the corn. He just hopped inside the box and waited a little to see if anything would happen. But nothing happened. Everything seemed all right. Then he took one more hop and put his head down to the corn and began eating.

Doctor Rabbit ate pretty fast, because he did not quite like the idea of being in a box with one end closed. He was a little nervous because some one might slip up while he could not see. The first grain of corn was sweet and delicious. He took another bite. Somehow each bite seemed a little better than the last.

Doctor Rabbit ate as fast as he could. It was strange that he dared to go into that box at all, for he knew Yappy Hound might come tearing out through the apple orchard at any minute. But we all forget now and then, no matter how careful we think we are and that's what happened.

8
THE TAP CLOSES

Doctor Rabbit forgot all about the little stick that came down through the box and over the corn. Then while he was eating he happened to touch the stick with his nose, and 'PLUNK' a board dropped down behind him and he was a prisoner! That was dreadful; not because it was dark in the box, for Doctor Rabbit was used to dark places. He had found out long ago that the dark itself never hurt anybody.

No, it was not the dark that troubled him, although that was not pleasant. It was the box itself that worried him. It held him and he couldn't get out. Smart Doctor Rabbit was caught, just as any other rabbit might be caught in a trap!

The very first thing Doctor Rabbit thought about was that some one would come to the trap and find him before he could get out. He did not know it, but this box was a regular trap for cottontail rabbits. Once in a while a jack rabbit goes into one to get the corn, and he is caught, too, but mostly it is for cottontails.

There was no way to get out of the box, Doctor Rabbit found, unless he could raise the sliding door that had dropped down behind him. But it was a perfectly smooth pine board, and there was no way he could raise it.

Doctor Rabbit remembered now how that box had looked from the outside. Yes, he even remembered how the pine stick came down through the top of the box. He had not understood why that stick was standing over the corn, but now he knew only too well.

Yes, Doctor Rabbit could see through the little opening at the top of the box, and the end of the stick was just inside the hole there. But the end of the stick did not come through into the box so that Doctor Rabbit could get hold of it. If it had, he might have pulled down on the stick and so lifted up the door. But even if he could have done that, it would not have helped him, for when he let go of the stick to get out, the door would have dropped down again before he could do so.

"My!" said Doctor Rabbit, "if only some of my friends would come along and find me in here! They could easily help me from the outside, for I could tell them just what to do. Yes, if one of them were only here to push down on that stick, the sliding door would fly up and I could get out. If Jack Rabbit would only come hopping by! He is big and strong. He could push down that stick in a minute. And how he would hurry if I could only let him know!"

Doctor Rabbit tried and tried to get his nose under the sliding door so that he could lift it, but he could not do it.

Just a few tiny rays of light came in at the top of the box where the stick was, and through a small crack at one side. Some of the corn was still there, but Doctor Rabbit wasn't hungry now. He felt pretty bad, and he said:

"I guess this is about the worst fix I've ever been in. And it's all Old Bill Horned Owl's fault too. But I must think of a way to get out." And just then he heard some one walking toward the box. Who could it be?

9
POKY SKUNK IS SO SCARED HE IS FOOLISH

Doctor Rabbit sat still in the box trap and listened. He could hear someone walking over the dead leaves toward the box. He tried to look through the small crack on one side, but couldn't see who it was.

The box trap was just at the edge of the woods and just at the edge of the apple orchard. A great spreading elm stood near

the trap, and a big pile of dead leaves covered the back end of trap. For this was a very old trap. It had stood there for years: in fact, there had not been any corn in it for a long, long time. The trap was forgotten, but this very morning a hunter had chanced to pass that way. He had some shelled corn in his pocket, and he tossed a little of it into the trap. That's why the corn was so nice and fresh.

Yes, the trap was so old and so damp that it smelled musty. It was a pretty big box trap, and that helped a little, for Doctor Rabbit could move around, and was not cramped.

There were a good many dead leaves in the apple orchard, as there always are, and Doctor Rabbit could hear someone walking on these dry crackling leaves. Whoever it

was had gone away, and he did not know whether to be sorry or glad. Now, if he could just have known that it was Jack Rabbit walking around out there, Doctor Rabbit would have shouted, for joy, but as it was, he didn't dare to call out.

It might be Farmer Roe's big dog Yappy, but Doctor Rabbit did not believe the footsteps were Yappy's. Yappy is big and moves around pretty fast when he is out hunting. But whoever it was Doctor Rabbit heard, they moved softly and slowly. Doctor Rabbit wished the footsteps would come nearer the box so he might be able to tell who was out there.

And then, sure enough, the steps did start toward the box. Nearer and nearer they came. Doctor Rabbit trembeled with fear and ecitement. He fancied he saw a number of things, and he made up his mind

quickly. He thought perhaps whoever was out there would push the box over on its side, then push back the sliding door. If this happened, Doctor Rabbit made up his mind that he would be all ready to go. Yes, sir, the instant that door was open he would dash out so suddenly that the one at the door would be too much surprised to grab him.

So Doctor Rabbit got all ready for a quick spring. Nearer and nearer came the soft footseteps. Right up to the box they came, and then they stopped again. Then Doctor Rabbit heard a soft scratching on the box outside . And a voice said:

"Well, well! There's surely somebody inside this box, and I do declare! if this isn't Doctor Rabbit's medicine case! I wonder if he is caught in the box!

Doctor Rabbit didn't wait for more, He knew who it was talking. It was his good friend Poky Skunk.

"Poky! Poky!" Doctor Rabbit called. "Push down on the stick on top of the box and let me out. Bill Horned Owl is in the woods! Quick! I must get out and tell our friends!

We sir, it was queer then how Poky Skunk acted. He might have been able to get Doctor Rabbit out of the box if Doctor Rabbit hadn't mentioned Old Bill Horned Owl. But as soon as he knew Bill Horned Owl was in the Big Green Woods, Poky Skunk was scared out of his wits. You see, Poky is afraid of Bill Horned Owl, or of any horned owl. Other owls from other families will not do such a bold thing, but Bill Horned Owl does not hesitate to catch a skunk, and to eat him too.

So you see why Poky Skunk was so scared. He didn't know where Old Bill was, of course. Doctor Rabbot had just said he was somewhere in the Big Green Woods. So Poky kept thinking, "Old Bill may be away off in the woods, orth he may be sitting right up here in this tree."

Now, to be sure, he began trying to do what Doctor Rabbit told him, but he pushed on everything but the right stick; in fact Poky kept looking at the big elm and he pushed anything his feet touched. He was so scared he didn't know what he was doing. That's just the way people do sometimes. They get scared, and instead of doing the right thing, they do foolish things. Poky was looking with both his eyes up into the big elm while he pushed first on one thing, then on another. H e was ready to run any minute.

"My goodness!" cried Doctor Rabbit, "Why don't you push down the stick and let me out, Poky? What are you doing out there?"

"Yes, yes, I will in just a minute! Poky said. "Yes, yes, I'll have you out soon, I know I will!"

He shouted it pretty loud, and Doctor Rabbit shouted pretty loud, too. And they both kept talking a little louder and a little louder. Doctor Rabbit yelling for Poky to hurry up about it and Poky yelling that he "guessed he was hurrying as fast as he could."

"It takes time to get a big rabbit like you out of a box," he panted as he looked up into the tree and pushed on the front part of the box.

"What are you pushing there for?" yelled Doctor Rabbit. "That's not going to

any good! Push on the stick above the box!" Then Poky trembling all over, climbed on top of the box and pushed up on the stick. Doctor Rabbit looking through the hole in the top of the box, saw him and shouted louder than ever, "Quit pushing up on it! Push down, down on it!"

But Poky didn't have time. He fell backward off the box, and away he ran for the nearest thicket.

"He's after me! I've got to go!" Doctor Rabbit heard him shout.

And so it was. Bill Horned Owl, half dozing over in the woods, heard Doctor Rabbit's voice getting louder and louder as he got crosser and crosser. And in a minute Old Horned Owl was wide awake.

"A rabbit!" he said. "I'll go over there right away!" And he did, too. He didn't see

Doctor Rabbit, of course. But he saw Poky Skunk and swooped down to grab him. He was so hungry he eat him in a hurry.

10
BILL HORNED OWL COMES TO CALL

Well, Doctor Rabbit kept still for a little time and listened, He didn't hear anything after Poky ran and called out, "He's after me!"

By and by Doctor Rabbit frowned and said, "Now I wonder if Old Bill Horned Owl really was after him. I'll bet he was so scared he just thought so. Why doesn't he hurry back, anyway, and get me out? I'm getting

tired. I'll call out to him again. Maybe that'll hurry him up."

Now, if Doctor Rabbit had known what had happened, he certainly never would have called out just when he did. For Old Bill Horned Owl had come over and he really did chase Poky Skunk. But when he lost Poky, who hid in a friendly thicket, Old Bill flew back into the big elm right over the box trap where Doctor Rabbit was. So he heard every sound Doctor Rabbit made. And Bill, you remember, was very , very hungry.

But Doctor Rabbit didn't know this, and he called out, "Come on back here, Poky Skunk, and let me out! Hurry Up! Don't be so scared, First thing you know Old Horned Owl will come over here. Then he'll watch this box, and there's no telling

when I'll get out. Hurry up."

Well, sir, Old Bill Horned Owl opened his big round eyes with surprise. He was certain he heard a rabbit over that way, but he supposed when Poky Skunk got away the rabbit ran away too.

Old Bill laughed and said, "Well, well! This is luck! That rabbit is right down there inside that box. He'll be coming out soon, I suppose," Then he laughed again, and he was so sure of that rabbit coming out, that he thought he would fly down and take a peep into the box. He hoped it was a nice, big, fat, juicy rabbit.

So he flew right down and and peeped through the hole in the top of the box.

"Ha! ha! ha! shouted Bill Horned Owl, stepping about over the box. "It's that big, fat rabbit, as sure as I'm alive! This is too good! Ha! ha! ha! All I have to do, Mr.

Rabbit, is just wait around until you come out! Oh, but this is luck! Ho! ho! ho!

And Old Bill actually pecked through the hole in the top of the box, but he didn't quite reach Doctor Rabbit, who backed away from the hole in a hurry. Doctor Rabbit didn't lose much time getting to the back of that box. Old Bill Horned Owl thought Doctor Rabbit could get out of the box any time he wanted to. So he danced around on top of the box and said"

"Come on out, Mr. Rabbit! Come on out! You might just as well come out, I'd come in, only I know you have your door locked. So I'll just wait outside, thank you! You know, of course, there's a nice, shady elm right over you, I'll just take a seat up there and wait for Mr. Rabbit.

I'll just wait around until you come out! Oh, but this is luck! Ho! ho! ho! I like to wait around for folks, anyway, Well, here's a nice limb right over your box, Mr. Rabbit. I can sit here all day and all night if I need to. This is just fine. You'd better come out, because if you don't and I get tired of waiting, I may come down and turn you house over! Ha! ha! ha!

11

A RABBIT AND AN OWL BOTH GET ANGRY

Old Bill Horned Owl was so sure of getting Doctor Rabbit that he went right on talking, as pleased as could be, Ha! ha! ha! he said, "I wondered what all that noise was over here! Ha! ha! ha!" ha! Now I know that skunk I came near catching was trying to get this fat rabbit out of the box. I bet he thought he'd eat him himself. I was almost quick enough to get that skunk, and I'm

certainly going to be quick enough to get that rabbit. He! he! he! When I come into the woods all the skunks have to hide. They know me! I think I'll just take another look at my rabbit. I call him mine, because he'll certainly be mine as soon as he pokes his head out of that box.

And Old Bill Horned Owl flew down on the box and peeped in the hole on top. He put one of his big, round eyes down to the hole and looked in. Then something happened. You see, Doctor Rabbit was naturally very much scared when he found out that Old Bill was there. He was badly scared and he shook and trembled. But somehow, the more he thought it over, the angrier he got at Bill Horned Owl. He thought:

"How easily Poky Skunk could have pushed down on that stick if it hadn't been for Old Bill. Yes, this Old Horned Owl is the cause of all my trouble."

The more Doctor Rabbit thought, the angrier he got. And so, when Old Bill Horned Owl put his eye down to the hole Doctor Rabbit was all ready and waiting for him. He just gathered up some dirt that was in one corner of the box, and threw a lot of it right into Old Bill's face! Well, sir, that was funny! You should have seen Old Bill. He squawked and fell off the box backward and was as angry as a wet hen.

'What are you trying to do? he shouted.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Doctor Rabbit. "I'll show you, Old Horned Owl, what I'm trying to do, if you ever put your old eye

He squawked and fell off the box backward

down to that hole again. Try it and see what you'll get!" Although he was pretty angry, Doctor Rabbit chuckled in spite of it. He peeped through the crack at one side of the box and saw Old Bill Horned Owl on the ground rubbing the dirt out of his eyes. Old Bill was terrybly angry, and by and by, when he had got most of the dirt off his face, he flew up on a limb and shouted fiercely at Doctor Rabbit.

"We'll see about this!" he cried. I'll get you when you come out of that box, and I'll wait if it takes a week. You might as well come out now and make a run for it. You'll have to, sooner or later. The fact is, you might just happen to get away if you run out now, but you'll be getting stiff pretty soon from being cramped up in there so long.

Yes, you'd better come out now, before you get too stiff to run. It's bad for a rabbit to stay too long in a box. He might--he really might -- starve to death!"

"You go and talk to the moon!" said Doctor Rabbit. "You'll get stiff and a good many other things before you get me, and I'm certainly going to have my say before we get through with this business. You'd better come down again and peep in and see how you like my house inside. Ha! ha! ha!

And Doctor Rabbit laughed, even if he was in a pretty bad fix. For he had found that when he kept his temper sweet he could think harder and faster, and that was what he was trying to do now. He must think up some way to get out of that trap and save himself and all his friends. He believed Poky Skunk was already warning them. That would help a whole lot.

12
DOCTOR RABBIT FINDS A WAY

Doctor Rabbit knew well enough that Old Bill Horned Owl meant every word when he said he would stay in the tree and watch. And he knew, too, Old Bill was right when he said that a rabbit that stayed in a trap too long would get stiff and weak, and finally starve. But then, he knew only too well why Old Bill wanted him to come out.

If Old Bill Horned Owl had known the truth - if he had known that Doctor Rabbit could not get out of the trap - he would have spread his wings and gone away. He would probably have said, "That big fat rabbit will starve in there. I wish I could get him out, but I can't."

But Bill Horned Owl did not know the truth, so he stayed right in the tree and waited, and waited, and watched, and watched for Doctor Rabbit to come out. He thought Doctor Rabbit might pop out 'most any minute.

All this time Doctor Rabbit was thinking. He said softly to himself: "Poky Skunk has got away. He'll tell all our friends about Old Bill, and he'll tell them about me, too, and where I am. The only trouble is that Old Bill is hiding in the big elm tree and

watching for me. And if any of my friends come along and try to get me out, he may catch them. No, I've got to get out of this trap, and I've got to do it myself. I know there's a way if I can find it. So I'm going to take a good look at the inside of this old trap."

And Doctor Rabbot began hopping slowly round and round the box, and looking it all over, carefully. This trap was about twice as big as most box traps. The boy who made it thought if he made it big enough he might perhaps catch a coon or a possum. That's why the box was so large, and that's why Doctor Rabbit could walk around in it. As he stopped to look

through the small crack in one side of the box, Doctor Rabbit saw that one end was under the old pile of damp dead leaves. Scratching on the bottom board back in this end of the box, he found it was rotten and soft. His heart gave a big thump, and he began scratching with all his might. The wood gave way easily, and by and by Doctor Rabbit helped by gnawing it. He bit and scratched and gnawed for all he was worth, and soon he had a small hole clear through the end of the bottom board. Yes, he was clear through. There was no doubt about it, for he could feel the damp earth under the box.

He rested for a while, but not long. Then scratch! scratch! scratch! he went at it again in a hurry, and every minute the hole grew bigger and bigger. As Old Bill

Horned Owl had flown a little higher up in the elm, he couldn't hear Doctor Rabbit scratching. This was lucky for Doctor Rabbit. Every now and then he could hear Old Bill laughing, and then he went at his scratching harder than ever.

13
ALL THE LITTLE CREATURES WANT TO HELP

All of a sudden Doctor Rabbit stopped digging and listened. Bill Horned Owl was after someone near the trap.

I'll get you yet, Mr. Jack Rabbit," he shouted. "I'll bet you came here to see this fat rabbit in the box. Now I'll just get you for your trouble!"

"Well, do it then!" Mr. Jack Rabbit replied.

Doctor Rabbit knew by the voice that it was his old friend Jack Rabbit. He couldn't see the race but he knew well enough that Old Bill Horned Owl was flying and darting this way and that, trying to catch Jack Rabbit. Doctor Rabbit was not much afraid that Jack Rabbit would get caught, for he was swift on his legs. Doctor Rabbit had plenty of time to think things out, and he said to himself:

'Now I know what has happened. It's just as I thought. Poky Skunk hurried around and told as many of my friends as he could find. One of them was Jack Rabbit. And good old Jack Rabbit has taken a chance on Bill Horned Owl and has tried to get near the box and help me out. Now isn't that splendid! But I'm not surprised. It's. not the first time Jack

Rabbit has helped me when I was in a tight place. Well, I s'pose almost all my friends know where I am and I guess they're all on the look-out for Old Bill, too. So since things are not as bad as they might be, I'll go right on with my digging.

So he went on with his digging, But he had not been at it long when he hurt his foot. It was not a bad hurt, but Doctor Rabbit found he would have to give the foot a rest.

"I need a little rest anyway," he said. "I can go back to my digging in a while. There is no hurry now. I'll just lie down and close my eyes and rest. Then I'll start digging again and pretty soon I will dig my way out."

So Doctor Rabbit closed his eyes. He did not mean to go to sleep. But being a

doctor, he knew he must rest his foot. then, too, he was very tired. That's why, after his eyes had been shut for just a few minutes, he went sound asleep. Yes, and very soon he was as sound asleep as he ever was in his life.

Now, Doctor Rabbit was right when he thought Jack Rabbit had come over to try and get him out. Poky had told everybody, just as Doctor Rabbit thought he would, and all of Doctor Rabbit's friends were terribly frightened. Of course they were scared, because they were all afraid of Old Bill Horned Owl themselves. But they were dreadfully worried about their best friend, Doctor Rabbit. He was in a trap and Poky told them, he couldn't get out. What could they do about it? If Old Bill hadn't been right over the box trap, watching, they knew

just what they could do. They could go over to that box trap and stay there until they did get Doctor Rabbit out. But there was no use going over there with Old Bill Horned Owl watching. He could gobble up every one of them, and they knew it. Brave Jack Rabbit did try to get near the box, but it was no use. He had to run for his life, just as they had all thought he would.

After they had seen Jack Rabbit start on his exciting run, they all went back a little farther into the woods and just sat and stared at each other. Jack Rabbit ran in a big circle and soon came up to them.

"It does look a little bit bad for Doctor Rabbit," Jack Rabbit said, panting. "But I haven't lost hope by any means. No, indeed, I haven't. I've seen too much of Doctor Rabbit to get discouraged. No, it certainly doesn't pay.

Of course there's no use going up to that trap again right now. Let's wait until it's dark. Of course Old Bill Horned Owl can see mighty well after dark, but there may be some things we can do then that we can't do now. Besides, Old Bill may get tired of watching."

And so they waited until night. Then, when it was really dark, they all got together and went slippping through the woods toward the box trap. They did not know how they could help Doctor Rabbit, but they wanted to be as near to him as possible. They thought something might happen so they could get him out of that dreadful trap.

They all looked and listened as they went along through the black woods. They didn't know what minute Old Bill

Horned Owl might come swooping down to grab one of them in his claws.

14
O. POSSUM HAS AN EXCITING RUN

As they all stole through the woods O. Possum said, "Why don't you all fight Old Bill Horned Owl? If you all pitch into him and hurt him, he'd surely go away. You see, it takes me to think of things!"

"Huh!" exclaimed Mandy Possum with disgust. "Why don't you pitch into Old Bill yourself, O. Possum?"

"Humph!" said O. Possum. "I guess I'd fight him if I wanted to! I'm not afraid!"

"Ha! ha! ha!" Mandy Possum laughed. "Oh, no, O. Possum, you're not afraid! Oh, no! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Well, anyway," O. Possum said, "while the rest of you were fighting Mr. Horned Owl I could go to the box trap and let Doctor Rabbit out. Mr. Horned Owl would be so busy fighting he wouldn't see me go. Of course, if he did see me I suppose I'd run away from the trap. 'Most anybody would."

"Yes," agreed Mandy, "I know you pretty well, O. Possum. I know what you want. You want all of us to fight Old Bill Horned Owl, and then you'll run home and get into bed and go sleep. I know you, O. Possum."

"Ho, hum!" yawned O. Possum. "Doctor Rabbit will get out when he takes a notion. Ho, hum! I'm sleepy. I wish I were home now in bed. How much farther have we to go?"

"Keep still! Mandy warned him as they came to a thicket not far from the box trap. O. Possum and Mandy Possum, Stubby and Mrs. Woodchuck, Cheepy and Mrs. Chipmunk, and all the others crept softly into the thicket. They kept as still as they could, but of course they just naturally had to whisper a little. Jack Rabbit made them all happy when he told them he would go over to the trap and try to push the door open and let Doctor Rabbit out.

"And if I don't do it the first time, I'll just keep on trying till I do get him out," Jack Rabbit said.

Then O. Possum got so excited he began talking out loud.

"Sh-h! Keep still, keep still!" warned Mandy, but O. Possum said he ws keeping just as still as he could. "Nobody," he said, "could keep perfectly still with so many exciting things going on." At least, he couldn't.

"I've just got to talk, Mandy," he said. "Maybe if I talk, I'll get good and mad at Old Bill Horned Owl and go over there and tell him to come on down and fight if he wants to." Just then O. Possum set up an awful yell and cried, "Take that out! Take it out!" They all thought O. Possum had certaily gone crazy, and Mandy shouted excitedly "O. Possum, what do you mean? You'll have Old Bill right down on us! What's the matter with you, are you crazy?"

"No, I'm not crazy. It's a sticker! It's in my foot! Take it out! Yow! yow! yow!" yelled O. Possum.

Well, sir, Mandy got hold of his foot and pulled that sticker out in a hurry. But it was too late, the mischief was done. Old Bill Horned Owl heard the noise and came swooping down to see if he couldn't get that dinner he'd been after. Yes he flew down to the thicket and boomed in his awful voice, "Who? Who?

"It wasn't me!" yelled O. Possum, scared out of his wits. "It wasn't me!"

He kept yelling it over and over, then he rushed out of that thicket, helter skelter, and away he ran. He was so scared he didn't know where he was going. Old Bill Horned Owl was right after him, too. Now, O. Possum can't run very fast,

and if he had had to run very far, it would have been the last of him. He knew he had made a mistake as soon as he got to running. He knew he should have stayed in the thicket.

"But it 's no use now," said O. Possum. "I've got to hide somewhere right away."

So he took the first hiding place he saw. And what do you think! It was the big pile of dead leaves near the big elm--the very pile that partly covered the trap where Doctor Rabbit was caught.

O. Possum dived into the leaves, dug down in them until he was on the moist ground, and then he burrowed until he came to a board. That stopped him.

"I guess I've run against a stump," said O. Possum. "Well, it's no matter. I might as well stop here as anywhere. Why shoud I

O. Possum dived into the leaves

keep on working? I don't need to. Ho, hum!" he yawned. "That was about the most exciting run I ever had. It's hard on a body, too, when he isn't used to running. Ho, hum! It must have made me sleepy. Something did, anyway. And I'm all safe and sound in here. The rest of them will take care of themselves. I s'pose Mandy will scold me about it, but everybody's got to have some sleep. Ho, hum! My, but I am sleepy! My eyes won't stay open!" And O. Possum lay down and in half a minute was sound asleep.

15
DOCTOR RABBIT IS FREE AT LAST

Now, you remember that Doctor RAbbit hurt his foot and laid down in the box to rest it, and went to sleep. Well, he didn't wake up until he heard a noise out in the thicket. He heard his friends out there all talking at once. And a bit latter someone bagan digging under the pile of leaves near the end of the trap. Pretty soon he heard something moving around. It hit the box, and then then everything was still. That was

when O.Possum went to sleep, of course, but Doctor Rabbit didn't know who it was that was so near. It might be an enemy, for all he knew. You see, O. Possum had only muttered to himself, and Doctor Rabbit couldn't tell whose voice it was.

So Doctor Rabbit thought he's better keep still a minute and listen. By and by O. Possum was sound asleep. Now when O. Possum sleeps soundly he always talks aloud--and the sounder O. Possum sleeps the louder the talks. This time he was dead tired and slept like a log, and pretty soon he began talking loud and then louder and louder. Finally he yelled out, "Hi! yo! Mandy! Hurry up! Old Bill Horned Owl will get you sure's you're alive!

With this, Doctor Rabbit was wide awake. He opened his eyes and cocked up

his ears and said: "I'd know that voice in a million. That's O. Possum!"

Then Doctor Rabbit said out loud, "I suppose Bill Horned Owl chased him under the leaves. And if he can't eat, the first thing O. Possum does is to go to sleep. I'll wake him up and make him dig, too. Then I can get out sooner."

But O. Possum didn't wake up. He kept right on sleeping and talking. "Well, I am digging, Mandy. I am digging. I'm digging away from Bill Horned Owl, and I'll be there in a jiffy. Yes I'm digging - digging - digging." And O. Possum turned over and snored.

"You old sleepy head, wake up and help me dig!" Doctor Rabbit shouted. "I'm about half way out, and I want you to dig and help me!"

But O. Possum only said, "I am digging. Yes, and I dug 'most all night. I dug about a mile, I reckon. Yes, I dug out, I dug - dug - dug -"

Then O. Possum quit talking, and slept peacefully on.

Doctor Rabbit was getting angry. "You old sleepy head!" he cried. "Well, never you mind, I can dig myself out if I have to. And when I do get out, I'll wake you up!" Whew! how Doctor Rabbit made the dirt fly then! He forgot all about his sore foot. "I'll show him how to sleep the dead head!" said Doctor Rabbit. "I'll wake him up when I do get out!" And my, my, how he did dig!

Scratch! scratch! scratch! Dig! dig! dig! Doctor Rabbit's feet went so fast you couldn't see them. Then by and by he was clear out of the box and in the loose

dirt under O. Possum. Doctor Rabbit dug on up to O. Possum. and then butted him with his head.

"Yow! yow!" screamed O. Possum, jumping up. "Who has hold of me?"

The Doctor Rabbit's head popped up in the dark place. ""Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed, and O. Possum said, "Oh, goodness me! Is that you Doctor Rabbit, or is it your ghost? I know your voice. How did you ever get in here?"

"Never mind now how I got in her," said Doctor Rabbit. "There's one thing sure, though, O. Possum, you didn't get me out; no indeed, you didn't. You're too much of a sleepy head. But I got out, and that's all I care about. Come on now. I want you to help me get rid of Old Bill Horned Owl. He started all this trouble.

Come on and hurry up, O. Possum. Do as I tell you, and I promise you'll have some fun!"

"Wel, I declare!" said O. Possum. "You say I was asleep and if I had waked up I might have helped you? Honest, Doctor Rabbit, I went to sleep just as easy as easy."

"Oh let it go," said Doctor Rabbit as they started out. "Let it go. If a person does the best he can, I reckon that's all he can do, even if he's just a possum. It was awfully hard on me, but I suppose if I were a possum, I'd be a sleepy head too. So just let it go now, and let's hurry along! Bill Horned Owl thinks I am still in the box. But he'll soon know better."

16
DOCTOR RABBIT BEGINS TO GET READY

Now, O. Possum," said Doctor Rabbit, "follow me. We'll get out from this pile of leaves and into the woods in pretty quick time, and Bill Horned Owl won't see hide nor hair of us."

"I'm afrai to go out again, but maybe I'd better try it," said O. Possum.

"You needn't be afraid," Doctor Rabbit whispered. You see they were just

ready to pop out of the hole where O. Possum went in. "there are some bushes right behind the tree. We'll dash out of the leaves and right into that thicket.

And they did. Then, when they were safe, O. Possum said, pointing with his front foot: "Say, Doctor Rabbit, Mandy and all the others are hiding right over there. They think you're still in that box trap. Won't they be surprised and glad when they see you?"

"They surely will!" Doctor Rabbit chuckled. "And I shall be mighty glad to see them again, too. Now, let's hurry and get to them. I'm in a big hurry to settle with Bill Horned Owl. We'll just take time to stop and say 'howdy,' and then you and I will be going right on over to my place to get something good for Mr. Horned Owl's case."

And Doctor Rabbit laughed so loud Bill Horned Owl hear the noise and boomed, "Who! Who-oo-oo! Who-oo-oo!" until you could hear him all through the dark lonesome woods, Yes, and everyone that heard that "Who!" Who-oo-oo!" shuddered too, and was afraid to stir out of his hiding place.

"He'll find out in a minute or two," whispered Doctor Rabbit to O.Possum. "I want him to stay right in that tree where he is until I'm good and ready. He thinks I'm in a trap yet. Well, let him think it. I want him to think it, and by and by I'll tell him. 'Who!"

And Doctor Rabbit chuckled softly to himself. As they stole away through the underbrush toward the thicket and where all the others were hiding, they heard old Bill mutter, "Most any minute now that big, fat cottontail will come out. I surely did hear him making a noise down there. Ho! ho! ho! I'll get

him. Such a great , big rabbit is worth waiting for. I'm glad I waited. Yes, he'll come popping out in a minute, so stiff he can hardly jump, and I'll have him before he can make three hops. A rabbit like that is worth waiting a week for, and I've waited only one night. I have to wait all day every day, so days don't count. Altogether, I think I'm a pretty lucky owl. This rabbit will make three meals. Let me see. I'll make my breakfast off him, and my dinner, and there will be plenty left for my supper. Ho! ho! ho!" Bill laughed and strutted around on the limb as satisfied as could be.

Now, Bill talked so loud that all Doctor Rabbit's friends in the thicket could hear. They felt ready to cry. Mandy Possum began to wipe her eye with the corner of her apron. She said she was sure O. Possum had come to some bad end.

"Yes," Mandy said, "I just know he'll never come back to me. He was a good possum, and

a good husband, too. He never gave me a cross word, and he was always good natured. And he was smart, too, if I do say it, and he was the best possum in the world. Boo! hoo! hoo! hoo!

Mandy began crying harder than ever, and then in popped Doctor Rabbit and O. Possum.

"Why, Mandy!" exclaimed O. Possum. "Why, Mandy are you crying about me? Why, I'm alright."

"No, I was not," Mandy snapped, drying her eyes in a hurry.

Then they all laughed, and laughed, and laughed. They were so glad to see Doctor Rabbit safe again that they just couldn't keep still. They said right away: Let's go and have a big parade." "Yes, do, let's do it now!" shouted O. Possum. But Doctor Rabbit said:

"No, no. we can't do that-just yet. You're all right; I'm glad you feel that way. You're real friends - there's no doubt about it. But I've got

a score to settle with Old Bill Horned Owl. When I've attended to hm, I'm in for that parade, and I'm in for making it a whooping big one!"

"Fine! fine!" they shouted. "What are you going to do to Old Horned Owl? What are you going to do to that old owl, Doctor Rabbit?"

But Doctor Rabbit only laughed and said, "Wait and see!" then he said, "Jack Rabbit, I'd like you to run over to that trap every few minutes. That'll make Old Bill think I am still in the trap. He thinks so now. There is no doubt about it. Hear him bragging about how he's going to get me."

They all kept still and listened. Yes, Old Bill was talking and laughing about the good luck he will have pretty soon.

"Well, now, said Doctor Rabbit. "O. Possum and I will have to be going. And, Jack Rabbit you might run over to the box trap right

now, if you will. O. Possum and I will slip out behind the thicket."

"I'll do that, and be glad to," said Jack Rabbit. So he ran out of the thicket and right over to the box trap and as he ran he cried:

"Oh, that poor Doctor Rabbit! I just know he'll have to come out of that box pretty soon, and then down out of the tree will swoop that horrid old owl and catch him. It's too bad! But the poor fellow will have to come out or starve!"

Then Jack Rabbit ran round in a big circle and disappeared. Pretty soon he slipped back into the thicket. They all chattered at once, wondering what Doctor Rabbit was going to do. They were might sure of one thing- that somehow Doctor Rabbit would get rid of Old Bill Horned Owl. And tjhey could hardly wait until O. Possum and doctor Rabbit came back.

17
A STICKY JOB

Who--oo! Who-oo! Who-oo! Bill Horned Owl's terrible voice rang out again. It echoed and echoed lonesomely through the woods, and it was about as lonesome a sound as you ever heard.

"Who-oo! who-oo! Who-oo!" Old Bill cried as Jack Rabbit came running over to the box trap. And Jack Rabbit said again: "Oh dear me! Poor Doctor Rabbit's in the trap. He'll soon come out and Old Horned Owl will catch him." Then off he ran, dodging this way and that way, and was soon out of Old Bill's sight.

After Jack Rabbit had run back and forth to the trap three or four times, Old Bill Horned Owl was tickled almost to death. He didn't care if he didn't catch Jack Rabbit, so long as he felt sure Doctor Rabbit was in the box and must soon come out. After he had chased Jack Rabbit the last time, Old Bill flew up to limb over the trap and laughed and laughed.

"I don't care much about old Jack Rabbit, he said," "I bet he's tough anyway. He's not very tender-that's certain. I don't care if he did get away. The fat cottontail in the trap suits me better. And I'll get him, too. Yes, I'll get him! Jack Rabbt may run out here as often as he wants to. If he isnn't careful I'll get him, too. Ha! ha! ha! This is too good! Hal ha! ha! I haven't tasted rabbit for a month. And now here's a big fat one all ready for me. I'll just have to wait a minute longer and then I'll have him. I'm just sure he's told this long-legged

rabbit that keeps. tearing around here that he's just about starved and has got to come out. I'll fly a little higher up in the tree and keep still. If he doesn't hear me, he'll probably think I've gone away. Then he'll come a-slipping out, and I'll come a-slipping down! He! he! he!

Old Bill laughed softly, and flew a little higher up in the tree, but not too high. No, he wanted to be handy when his rabbit came out.

All this time Doctor Rabbit and O. Possum wre hurrying over to Doctor Rabbit's home. When they got there, Doctor Rabbit said, "Come right on it, Brother Possum. I want you to put something on a piece of bark while I hold it."

The doctor Rabbit found a good, big piece of bark that he had handy, and got something out of a box.

"Now, Brother Possum," Doctor rabbit said, "dip into the box and spread that stuff mighty thick on this bark. Put it on till I tell you to stop."

So O. Possum dipped out a lot of sticky, straw-colored stuff and spread it on the bark.

My, how it did stick to him! The more he dipped into the box the stickier and stickier he got. He was the most stuck-up possum you ever met.

Finally he said, "what is this sticky stuff, doctor Rabbit? why, if we keep on, I'll be so covered with it I won't get clean for a week."

"Oh, that's no matter," said Doctor Rabbit politely. "It just means a little extra scrubbing for you, O.Possum. Just keep right on, you're doing a fine job."

"Meybe so, but it's not the kind of job I like," replied O. Possum. "Why didn't you put it on and let me hold the bark?"

"Oh, you do it so well, O. Possum," said Doctor Rabbit. "Your paws are just right to spread it. I can tell anybody who wants this kind of work done that O. Possum can do it better than anybody else. I'll tell them.

"You needn't bother to do that. I won't do any more of it. Haven't I got about enough on that bark? What is it, anyway?"

"Well," said Doctor Rabbit, "for one thing, there's a good deal of pine pitch in it. There are some other things in it, too, O.Possum, but you're not a doctor and would't understand if I told you. Now, you take hold of one end of this bark, and we'll carry it back to the thicket. When we get there I'll tell everybody what to do."

So they went on slowly through the woods. Once O. Possum stumbled and almost fell, but he caught himself, and on they went.

"I almost fell," O. Possum grumbled. "I'll be glad when we get rid of this thing. I can't see any sense in this kind of business, anyhow!"

18

BILL HORNED OWL IS CAUGHT

Doctor Rabbit only laughed at O. Possum's grumbling and hurried him along. By and by they came to the thicket where the others were. Everybody began talking at once, asking Doctor Rabbit what he had on the bark and what he ws going to do with it.

"Sh!" he said. "Not so loud, my friends. O.Possum has helped me like a good fellow, and I haven't told him yet. You'll see right away what I'm going to do. Now, Jack Rabbit, you take O. Possum's place, and we'll slip out of here with this bark. we might have to run very fast, and I'd need Jack Rabbit. When we've

gone, all the rest of you make as much noise as you can, so Old Bill Horned Owl will come over here for a minute. He won't need to stay long. I'll be ready for him in a jiffy. And when Jack Rabbit says, "All ready!" then you must scream: "That rabbit is getting out! He's getting out! That'll make Bill go back to the trap in a hurry. then you'll see what happens."

Doctor Rabbit and Jack Rabbit slipped out with the bark. At once all the others set up a great cry and sure enough, here came Old Bill Horned Owl. He flew back and forth over the thicket, but they weren't much afraid. You see, there were such a lot of briars in the thicket, he couldn't get in. Old Bill kept flying from one place to another. 'My!" he said, "what a lot of dinners and suppers there are down there if I could only get at them!"

They kept watching him and screaming until Jack Rabbit call out, "All ready!" Then

they shouted, "That big, fat rabbit is getting out at last! He's getting out! We hear him!"

"Aha!" cried Old Bill. "All the better for me!" And away he flew to the trap.

Now Doctor Rabbit had laid that bark, sticky side up, on the leaves beside the box trap. Jack Rabbit held the bark steady, and Doctor Rabbit burrowed beneath the leaves. Then, when Old Bill shouted he was coming back and would "see about it," Doctor Rabbit cried, "Oh! Oh! I'm out of the trap, but I'm fast under this log. Help! help! Somebody help me!"

"Ha! ha! ha! laughed Bill Horned Owl, as he flew up. "Oh, yes, big, fat rabbit, I'll help you out! To be sure I will, and I'll make a meal of you, too! Ha! ha! I knew I'd get you! I knew it all the time! Oh, this is too easy!"

And plunk! Old Bill Horned Owl lit with both feet square in the middle of that sticky bark.

He was caught - good and tight

"Let me go! Let me go!" he shouted. "Let go of me, or I'll flap you to pieces, you big, fat cottontail!" then he flapped his winds, but only once, for when they struck that awful pine pitch, they struck tight, too. Old Bill was stuck as tight to the bark as if he were nailed. Then Doctor Rabbit popped out and began dancing around Old Bill, shouting and laughing all the time. His friends all came running over in a hurry to see how Doctor Rabbit had caught Old Bill Horned Owl.

"I'll get all of you!" shouted Old Bill angrily, and tried to pull himself free, but it was no use. He was caught- caught good and tight. He never could get free until somebody freed him.

"Oh, yes, you'll get us!" shounted Doctor Rabbit, dancing around on his hind legs. "Yes, you will, Old Bill Horned Owl! Oh yes, you'll get me, of course you will! You were mighty sure of that! Oh, yes, Old Bill, this is too good!"

And they all danced round and round Bill and shouted and laughed and laughed and shouted. O. Possum turned a somersault and said, "Oh, this is too good, Mr. Horned Owl! This is too good! And that made them laugh until the tears ran down their cheeks.

19
AWAY GOES BILL HORNED OWL

As they danced around Old Bill Horned Owl and laughed, Mandy Possum shouted, "What are you going to do with this bad old owl, doctor Rabbit! What are you going to do with him?

"What am I going to do with him?" laughed Doctor Rabbit. "I guess I've done about enough, Mandy. I guess I'll leave him right where he is! .

Oh, this is too good, Old Bill Horned Owl! This is too good!" And they began dancing and laughing again.

The sun was coming up now and it was no longer dark in the Green Woods. Suddenly Doctor Rabbit shouted, "Run! run! Here comes a man with a gun!

Away they ran into the thicket. They peeped out, and sure enough, there came a man with a gun. He was walking right toward Bill Horned Owl, without even seeing him. All at once he spied him and said, "Well, well, here's a great horned owl. And he seems to be fast,"

He stooped down and looked and pulled at Bill.

"Well I declare! said the man again. "You certainly did get into something good and sticky. t looks like pine pitch. You're stuck good and tight, Mr. Owl. Well, that's all the

better for me. I'll just take you as you are, bark and all, and you'll have to behave yourself. Yes,I'll take you away with me, and I'm sure all the little animals of these beautiful green woods will be mighty glad to have me take you away. You are a very big horned owl, one of the largest I've ever seen. I'm lucky to find you. Now I wonder how you happened to get into this sticky stuff, and how so much of it happened to be on this peice of bark. Oh, well, I'll never know, but that's no matter. I've got you and I'll keep you."

You see, the man was not a hunter who kills birds and animals. No he was a naturalist and a nature lover. He rarely ever killed birds or animals. He only shot them when he could get a specimen in no other way. Yes, this man had a far happier time than the man who goes out into the woods to shoot anything and everything he sees. This man kept birds and

animals to watch them in order to study them and their ways.

"Yes," the man continued. "This is a fine specimen of the great horned owl, and I'm so glad I found him alive. I will take him with me and put him in a wire cage." And the man took Bill Borned Owl away, and he was never seen again in the Big Green woods.

When the man had gone quite a way with Bill Horned Owl, Doctor Rabbit shouted, "Hurrah! We are rid of him for ever and ever. Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" And all his friends came, every one of them: Stubby Woodchuck, Cheepy Chipmunk, O. Possum, Mandy Possum, and all the others.

They all came running and tumbling over each other, they were so glad Doctor Rabbit was safe and Old Bill Horned Owl had gone from the Big Green Woods for good and all.

"Let's have a circus parade," O. Possum shouted, and he ran up a little tree and swung by his tail on a limb. They all laughed at him

and Mandy said, "Yes, let's have a parade! Doctor Rabbit can ride at the head on Jack Rabbit. Jack Rabbit will make a splended circus horse."

"Sure I will!" shouted Jack rabbit. "Doctor Rabbit won't be a bit heavy! I'm feeling so good!"

So Doctor Rabbit jumped up on Jack Rabbit's back and sat there shouting and laughing. And Jack Rabbit pranced around like a real circuis horse. The others all followed, and O. Possum was the clown. He followed close behind Jack Rabbit and tried to step high and to prance like Jack Rabbit. And everybody laughed and laughed. They said it was certainly the best time they had ever had in their lives. And although things had looked pretty bad while it lasted, still, everybody said, it was almost worth having had things happen, to have so much fun when they were over.

And so while Jack Rabbit with Doctor Rabbit on his back is prancing along at the head of the "circus parade," and while O.Possum is trying to prance like him, and while they are all shouting and laughing at O. Possum, let us leave them.

THE END

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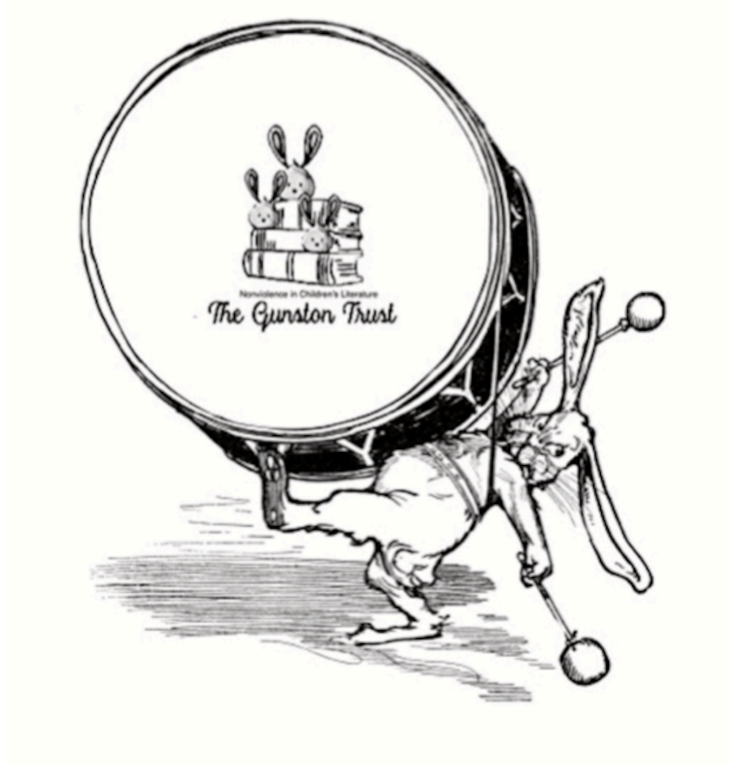
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